



Lower Yosemite Fall Project

What is this project about?

The Lower Yosemite Fall Project consists of a series of re-landscaping, removal, restoration, and reconstruction projects at one of Yosemite Valley's most popular natural destination areas. This improvement project will

- enhance a world-class visitor experience;
- create a loop trail system, including a trail to the base of Lower Yosemite Fall which is fully accessible to people with mobility impairments;
- reduce the perception of crowding and congestion at the main view areas and along the trail; and
- improve the hydrology of the braided stream system by replacing bridges with narrow openings that restrict the natural stream flow.

Currently underway, this is the first major improvement project to begin after the approval of the *Yosemite Valley Plan*. Financial support for this project comes from a partnership between the National Park Service and The Yosemite Fund, a nonprofit park partner that is the primary fundraising organization for Yosemite National Park.

What is the status of construction?

Starting in June 2002, National Park Service trail crews began improving a section of the loop trail just east of the main viewing bridge near the base of Lower Yosemite Fall. Crews have removed a section of the existing trail and rebuilt a new section that will be accessible to visitors with mobility impairments. This fall, the crews completed the rehabilitation of the main bridge. This spring, they will continue expanding the adjacent viewing terrace and building approaches to other new pedestrian bridges and boardwalks.

In partnership with the National Park Service, The Yosemite Fund identified a general contractor for the remaining phase of construction based on the approved construction documents. This work began in April 2003. The contractor has made good progress in constructing the new pedestrian bridges, two new boardwalks, and improving the western trail. Visitors can now see the stone veneered structures going up for the new restroom and new shuttle bus shelter.

When visiting the Lower Yosemite Fall area, check out the displays that describe the project and The Yosemite Fund's donation campaign. The entire Lower Yosemite Fall Project is estimated to be complete in the fall of 2004.

How will my visit to Lower Yosemite Fall change during construction?

The Lower Yosemite Fall parking area was closed in April 2003 in order to begin building an improved restroom facility and for staging construction equipment and materials. With the closure of the parking lot, visitors and tour buses have been directed to alternate parking areas.

Throughout all phases of the project, visitors will continue to have trail access to the bridge or the main viewing area near the base of Lower Yosemite Fall. However, there may be very brief, off-hour periods when access to these areas will be restricted in order to move construction equipment and materials. During the first phase, visitors will use the western side of the loop trail while the eastern trail is under construction; some trail work will also be occurring simultaneously along the western trail. Once the eastern trail is completed and open to the public, the majority of construction will then shift to the western trail.

Currently, two trail segments are closed—the section east of the Lower Yosemite Fall parking area that ends at the Valley Loop Trail intersection, adjacent to the National Park Service residential area; and the new section parallel to the Valley Loop Trail, west of the Valley Loop trail intersection. The Valley Loop Trail is open all the way from the main pedestrian bridge (below the Lower Fall) east to Yosemite Village.

For your safety, please use caution when traveling in or near the construction area and respect the construction safety barriers, workers, and equipment. Currently, most construction has stopped for the winter and will resume in mid-Spring.

Public Participation

Here are some ways to learn more about the Lower Yosemite Fall Project and stay involved:

- Add your name to the Planning Mailing List to receive the *Planning Update* newsletter and other planning-related announcements. You may also send in your email address to receive the parks periodic electronic newsletter.

Mail: Superintendent
Attn: Planning Mailing List
National Park Service
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Fax: 209/379-1294

Email: YOSE_Planning@nps.gov

- The status of this and other Yosemite National Park improvement projects will be periodically updated on the park's planning web site. Visit online : www.nps.gov/yose/planning/
- Visit The Yosemite Fund's web site at www.yosemitefund.org.